

Octopus Ink.org : The Blog of Cate Russell-Cole

Are You Over Your Blog? When to Ditch and When to Continue #IWSG

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I've been looking at this debate for some time, as I see more and more bloggers talking of burnout and writers starting to rebel against the endless demands of what you must do to succeed! To settle the matter, I took a few hours out to read and properly absorb both sides of the argument. It is complex when it comes to the publishing industry. At the end, all I could do was make up my own mind about what was right for me. I have placed as many of the arguments here as I can so you can also make up *your own mind*. Don't follow the herd: do what works for you!

Why Not to Blog:

- It is a huge, dark, swirling time vortex that will suck you in and eat you alive: IF you over-do it (blogging nearly every day). You will run out of ideas and creative energy.
- Jeff Goins (<http://goinswriter.com/>) made an excellent point about blogging being a form of instant self-gratification and positive feedback. If you blog to get comments and cyber hugs, rather than to follow your own individual creative journey, you are not doing yourself any favours.
- The more you blog, the less of your book/s you write.
- Placing your personal experiences online is a risk: everyone now knows about your negative traits and struggles if they should search for you, which now they do. For example, if you are a writer who has hassles with self-discipline and editing, you've just publicly announced that to future followers, publishers and other important contacts.
- As blogging is so easy and fast, quality can suffer. If you don't take the time to write properly, a blog will do you more harm than good.
- There are huge debates on whether blogging a book and then selling it is a good idea or not.
- Some argue that blogging to market your work does not sell more books. Some say it does.

- Some publishers tell you not to blog, it is a useless act. Some tell you to have one before you approach a publisher as they want a ready-made audience. Do what you want.
- Promotion on social media, writing and chasing down lost guest posts etc. chews up more time than it is worth investing: unless you have a massive audience backed up by concrete product/book sales that justify it. If you're that big as an author, then do you need a blog anyway?
- Monetizing just to make it worth the time, following trends to get followers, rehashing current topics rather than thinking about what you want to write, or mindlessly adopting cover reveals, blog hops and book tours just to fill space, will murder your individuality and teach you to be an automaton rather than an innovator and leader.

Why Blogging is Great

- You are writing: whether or not it is for your work in progress or not, you are building skills.
- You are building contacts through readers, followers etc. which can be of great value in the long run in many ways: economic, personal and emotional.
- You have the chance to explore book ideas and gain valuable feedback.
- If you just love doing it, then do it! Forget the statistics, if it's rewarding for you as a writer, go for it!
- Used the right way, blogging can assist in book sales: as long as you're using multiple sales strategies and not relying on your blog alone.
- Blogging a book first and then publishing it can work: you can capture a different audience. However, consider taking those posts offline long before you sell your book, or shorten them to teasers with links to your new book.
- Gaining support and feedback through your blog can be very helpful to writers, particularly as we tend to be introverts working on a lonely craft.
- If you have a specific purpose for your blog (such as sharing resources for writers); don't write more than you can cope with; and your following is steadily building, then blogging is an author/business building strategy you cannot do without.



When You Should Definitely Stop and Rethink Blogging

- When you find yourself filling in posts with anything, as you just want it done and are tired, drained and over it!
- Having no direction: which is sometimes apparent in writers with multiple blogs, unless they are for multiple purposes... but watch how much time that takes up!
- Letting your self-esteem be dictated by reader statistics.
- If it is an excuse for social media interaction which may be a sign you need to find a better answer to loneliness, or other tasks you are avoiding.
- When you are investing too much time, and other higher priority tasks are going begging as a result.

- Getting involved in blog challenges which run you into the ground with time demands and leave you wrecked.
- When you have made such a hash of a blog that is screams lack of quality, poor commitment to your writing, or stands as testimony to an attitude that makes you cringe!
- When your content is too personal and can do you damage in the future with potential relationships, employers or contacts in publishing and promotion.
- Taking on guest bloggers, cover reveals and other sharing initiatives where you are used and not supported or thanked.
- When the amount of effort invested is not getting you the results you need long term. If you are losing followers, not growing and this has been going on for at least six months, maybe it's just not the medium for you...

... and you know something? That's alright: you don't H.A.V.E. to be a blogger. Do what is right for you. Write what you have in your heart and be true to yourself. Follower numbers aren't everything.

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